

PALMETTO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1720 CAROLINA PARK BLVD., MT. PLEASANT, SC 29466

843-884-1504 palmettopreschurch.org

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

BAPTISM GUIDELINES

Baptism is the sign and symbol of inclusion in God’s grace and covenant with the Church. As an identifying mark, Baptism signifies

- a. the faithfulness of God,
- b. the washing away of sin,
- c. rebirth
- d. putting on the fresh garment of Christ,
- e. being sealed by God’s Spirit,
- f. adoption into the covenant family of the Church,
- g. resurrection and illumination in Christ.

Book of Order W-2.3004

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

1. Baptism is a Sacrament. “Sacrament” is a word derived from the Latin “sacramentum” which means – oath or pledge of allegiance. Roman soldiers took a “sacramentum” to the Emperor when they were inducted. A “sacrament” is our pledge of allegiance to Christ. Baptism and The Lord’s Supper are the two ordinances commanded by our Lord Jesus.
2. It is an “outward sign” of an “inward seal” of God’s grace. Grace is both God’s mercy towards us and His power in us. The “inward seal” is this: that all of God’s love is pledged to the child/individual. The “outward sign” is the visible symbolism of the washing with water.
3. It is a symbol of cleansing and uses common water, which is set aside by our prayer to use for which God intends. The outward symbolism of washing reflects the power of Christ to cleanse us of sin.
4. It is a promise made by God, the parents or individual, and the congregation. These three pledge to each other an eternal concern and valid love.
5. It is a means whereby individuals are identified with Christ and Christ’s Church. It represents the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into the lives of God’s people. It designates this person as set apart from the world to the vocation of being Christ’s child.

WHO MAY BE BAPTIZED?

The Baptism of those who enter the covenant upon their own profession of faith witnesses to the truth that God’s gift of grace calls for fulfillment in a response of faithfulness (W-2.3008 c). Therefore, whoever professes faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and the desire to become a part of the church, are candidates for baptism. Baptism is received only once. The PC(USA) recognizes all Baptisms with water in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit administered by other Christian Churches (W-2.3010).

WHO MAY HAVE THEIR CHILD BAPTIZED?

The Book of Order, part of the Constitution for the PC(USA), requires that at least one, and preferably both, parents shall be professing Christians and active members of a Christian church. Parents are the greatest influence for and teachers of the Christian faith. If parents have no faith or a nominal faith, they cannot give to their child that which they do not possess.

WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE BAPTISMAL VOWS FOR ADULTS?

The following questions will be asked of and affirmed by the Baptismal Candidate or Parents:

1. Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?
2. Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept Him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in His grace and love?
3. Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying His Word and showing His love?

WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE BAPTISMAL VOWS FOR PARENTS?

1. A recognition that this child is a trust and loan from God. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to make the child aware of God's love in Christ. We promise to raise our child in a way that keeps faith with God's trust.
2. A regular attendance in Church and at the Lord's Table in order that we may learn more about Christ and the faith into which our child is baptized. By our participation in worship, we are equipped to raise our child in Christ.
3. A study of the Word and will of God. By the preparation, we will be able to answer our child's questions, guide his/her thinking, and nurture his/her soul with honesty and integrity in those matters relating to our faith.
4. A worship of Christ in our home. Each day we will thank God for the gift of this person, offering grace and bedtime prayers from the child's birth. As the child grows we will continue to nurture him/her in the faith from home.
5. An encouragement of our child's participation in the church by expressing interest and concern for his/her Christian education. We will be willing to serve the church as it serves our child and the children of the church family. Parents should also be regular attendees of Church and Sunday School, thus demonstrating the importance of Christian education at all ages and life stages.

SESSION APPROVAL AND THE MINISTERS

The Session must approve the Baptism of each child or individual in accordance with the guidance of *The Book of Order*. Baptism is a sacrament of the whole Church and is not the discretion of the pastor alone. Requests for Baptism should be directed to the Clerk of Session. A Baptism at Palmetto Presbyterian Church shall be officiated by its Minister. Any special requests for guest Ministers must be approved by Session.

WHEN AND WHERE THE BAPTISM IS ADMINISTERED

Our Directory for Worship states: "As a sacrament, Baptism is an act of the whole Church. For this reason it should be regularly administered in the presence of the worshipping community (at public worship). It should be administered ordinarily at a service at which the written Word has been expounded (preached)."

TIME AND PLACE

Please come to the church 30 minutes before the service begins. The minister and elder representative will meet you prior to the service. This is a time for last minute preparation and questions, as well as a time of prayer. After the Baptism, you may remain in the service. Or, if desired, parents may take their child to the nursery. Children are always welcome!

GUESTS

All guests attending the service to witness the Baptism should plan to attend the whole service of worship. Baptism, as a sacrament, is the most profound act of worship and gives to the whole service special purpose.

CLOTHING

A special dress is welcome, but not necessary. To be baptized in the same garment as those who have gone before is right and meaningful.

ABOUT “GODPARENTS”

There is no provision for Godparents in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. Unlike the ages past in other nations, Godparents in the United States have no legal power or rights as such. The parents take vows, and the Church acts as sponsor to the child. In our worship service we do not dedicate Godparents, but they are welcome to participate in the service.

WHO SHALL HOLD THE CHILD?

The parent shall hold the child initially. During the Baptism, the minister will hold the child. After the child's introduction to the congregation, he/she will be returned to the parent.

IF THE BABY CRIES

If your child is disturbing the service beyond your limits, you may quietly exit the sanctuary. Do not be embarrassed. The surrounding and sounds are strange to the child, and crying is understandable.

OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY

All other children in the family may be with the parents as they present their child for Baptism. It is good and right that the older children know exactly what occurs in Baptism.

DUTIES OF THE CHURCH

Acknowledging that no person is worthy by his or her own merit to receive the gift of God's grace conferred and proclaimed in baptism, all those present when the sacrament is administered are to recall their dependence on God's grace and the common need in which they all stand praying that God will fulfill the promises sealed to the person being baptized, that they will be enabled to walk in newness of life, exercising the gifts of the Spirit, and be drawn closer to one another through their common acknowledgement of the need in which they stand.

The following form will allow us to prepare for your upcoming Baptism. After filling it out, please make an appointment to speak with the minister.

PALMETTO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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843-884-1504, palmettopreschurch.org

REQUEST FOR BAPTISM

Baptismal Candidate's Full Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Birthplace: _____

Gender: _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Members of What Church if not Palmetto: _____

Address of Church: _____

Desired Sunday for Baptism: _____

Desired Elder to Assist for Infant Baptism: _____

Approximate Number of Family and Guests Attending Service: _____

Please Return to:
Pastor/Clerk of Session
Palmetto Presbyterian Church
1720 Carolina Park Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29466
843-884-1504